

THE PRESENT WAR;

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE FREE CHURCH, OTTAWA, ON WEDNESDAY,
18th APRIL, BEING THE
DAY OF THE NATIONAL FAST.

BY THE
REV. THOMAS WARDROPE.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST,

(SECOND THOUSAND.

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE OTTAWA CITIZEN.
1855.



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Wm. Wardrope
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*From John A. Manning
1901*
S E R M O N

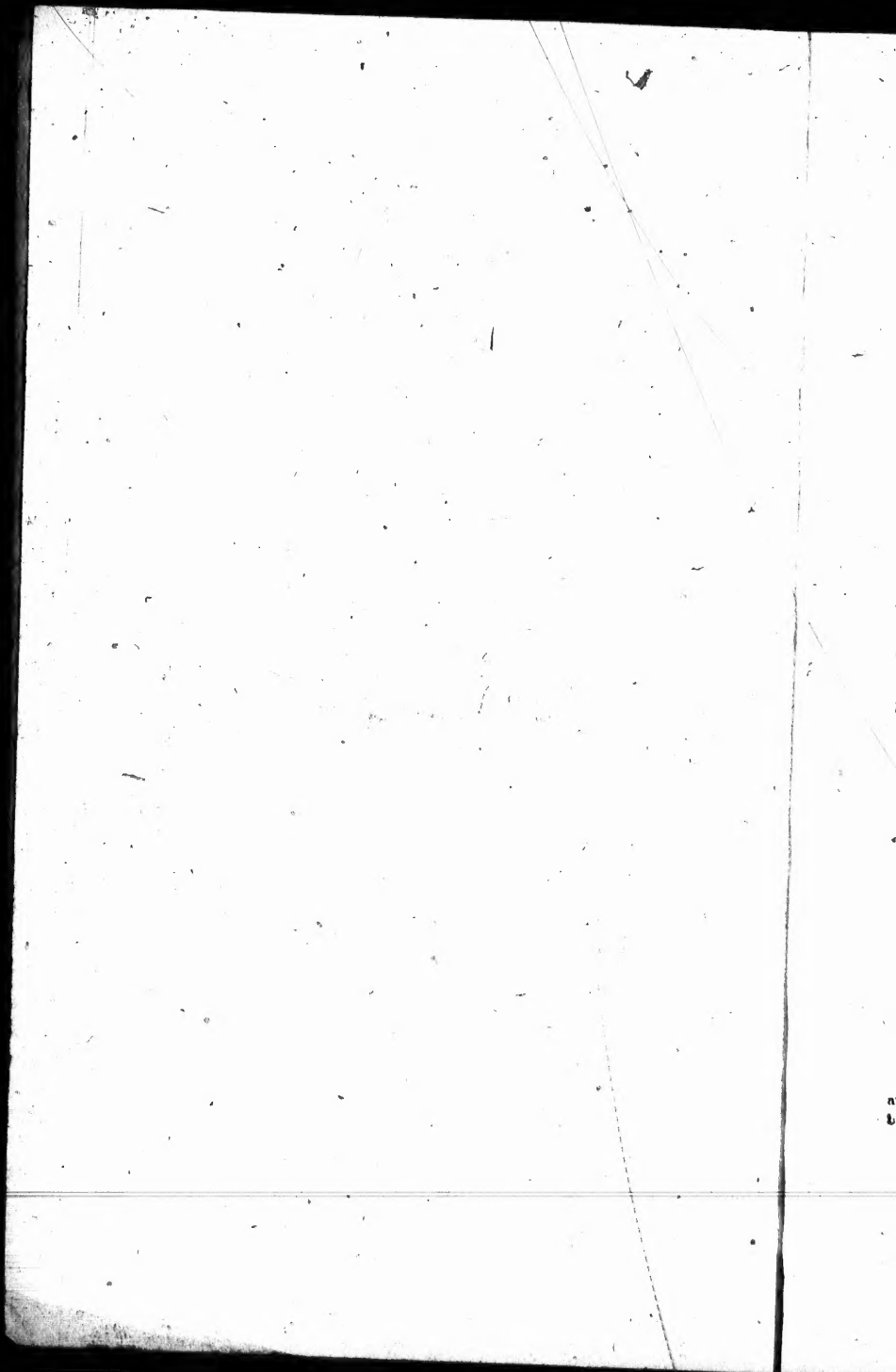
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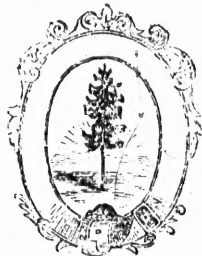
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PROCLAMATION.

THE MAYOR of the CITY OF OTTAWA, calls the attention of the Citizens to the ROYAL PROCLAMATION (a copy of which is hereunder written) appointing Wednesday, the Eighteenth day of April, 1855, as a day of General Fast and Humiliation, and of Prayer to Almighty God, for the success of the Allied Arms in the present War, and requests the Citizens to observe the same accordingly.

Ottawa, 16th April, 1855.

PROVINCE OF {
CANADA. }

EDMUND HEAD.

VICTORIA, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, QUEEN, Defender of the Faith, &c. &c. &c.

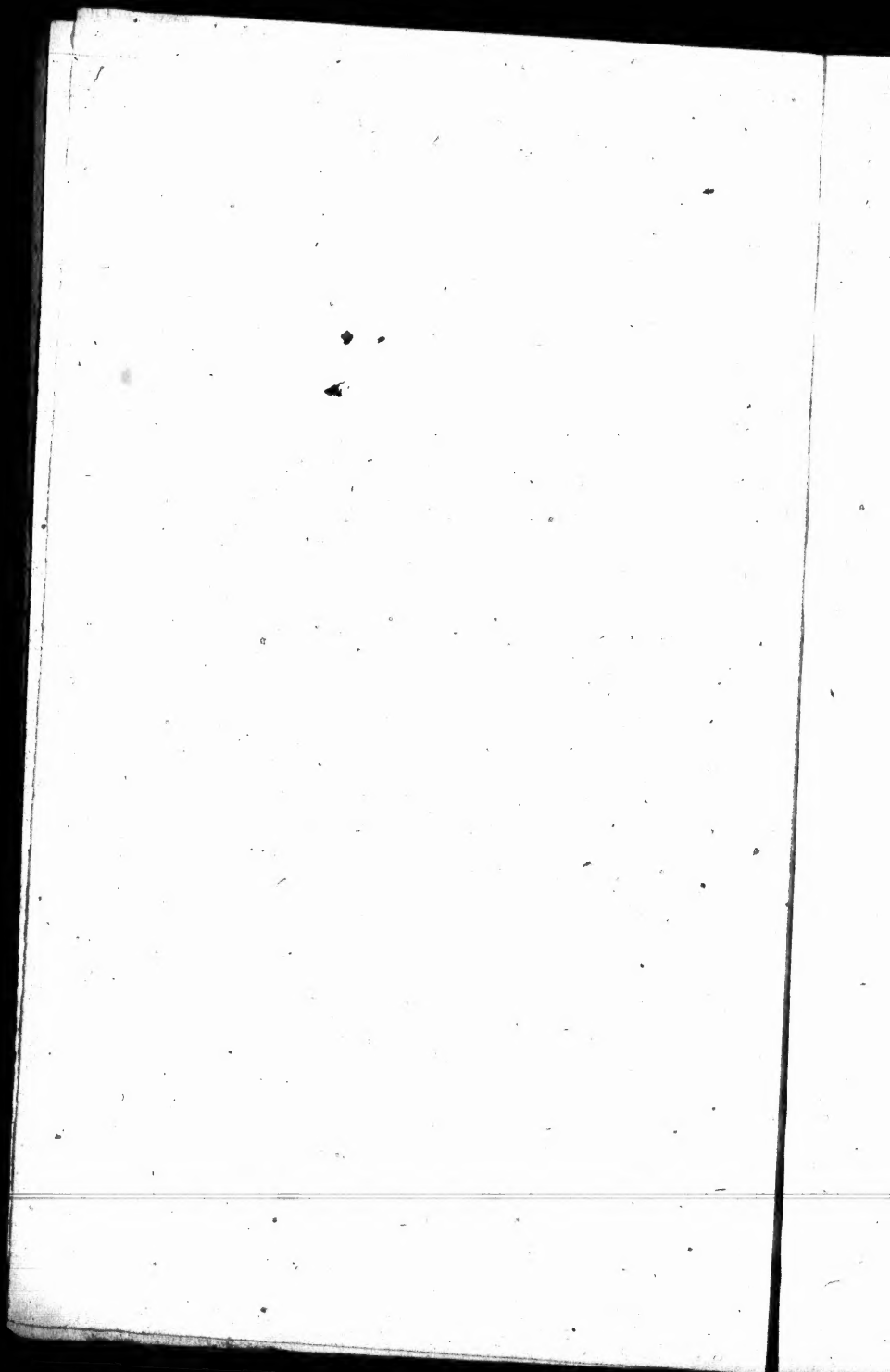
To all Our Loving Subjects in our Province of Canada—GREETING:

A PROCLAMATION.

“ L. T. DRUMMOND, *Acting Govl.*”

“ **KNOW YE**, that taking into most serious consideration the great struggle in which we are now engaged for the defence of the liberties of our people and of the civilized nations of Europe, and considering the propriety of setting apart a day to be observed throughout our said Province as a day of humiliation and solemn prayer to Almighty God for the success of the Arms in the present war, and for the speedy attainment of a favorable and lasting peace, “ We have thought fit, by the advice of Our Executive Council for our said Province, to issue you this Our Proclamation appointing, and we do hereby appoint Wednesday, the Eighteenth day of April, 1855, to be observed throughout our said Province as a “ Day of General Fast and Humiliation and of Prayer to Almighty God for the success of Our Arms in the said War.” “ And we do hereby earnestly exhort all Our loving subjects in our said Province reverentially and devoutly to observe the same as a day of general fast, humiliation and prayer.”

“THE FAST DAY.—Wednesday was observed in this city with all the silence and solemnity of the Sabbath. All the churches were open, and all the places of business were closed.”—*Ottawa Citizen*, April 21.



JEREMIAH, iv. 19.

" ——— Thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

VERSE 21 :

" How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet ? "

WE are met together this morning, my hearers, in circumstances of more than ordinary solemnity. From Sabbath to Sabbath we assemble here, as it is regularly said to us, " Let us go into the house of the Lord." Hither, as to other places of worship, " the tribes come up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." We meet on such *ordinary* occasions, because God has instituted the ordinances of public worship to be devoutly observed throughout all generations. We meet because He has commanded us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. We meet to unite in the worship of Him who created us, who sustains us in being, who wards off the dangers by which we are daily beset and heals the diseases by which we are many a time enfeebled, who makes the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice, and crowns us with loving kindness and tender mercies. We meet to attend to the counsels of heavenly wisdom, to hear what God the Lord will speak, to be reminded of the shortness and uncertainty of our time upon earth, to be told of a Saviour's love, to be admonished of the necessity of securing a personal interest in it before this mortal life shall have come to a close, and to be warned of the danger of neglecting so great salvation. Our meeting together must thus of necessity be *at all times* a solemn service, if we bear in mind the greatness and momentousness of the objects in view—if we are really convinced that we are responsible beings possessed of souls that will never die,—that we shall one day have to render in our account to God,—that the welfare of the soul is of more importance than the present welfare of the body,—that heaven is better than earth, and eternity longer than time.

But, as has already been observed, our present meeting is one of even more than ordinary solemnity. Our present meeting, taken in connexion with other similar assemblies throughout the land, is to be regarded as a *special national* recognition of God as the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe. This is not one of our ordinary *holy days* on which, as a matter of course, we assemble in the house of God. This is a day on which, but for special circumstances, we should have been otherwise engaged,—some being occupied about their farms, and others about their merchandize. But secular business is suspended,—commerce has closed her marts, mechanics have laid aside the implements of their trade, agriculturists have paused in their preparations for the work of the opening spring,—and we are with one consent met as a people to humble ourselves before God. And this, not by the order of a bishop, not by the admonition of a presbytery nor by the junction of a synod, but in compliance with a call addressed to us by our civil rulers who, in that very call, recognize and acknowledge a higher than they, a Ruler above all the rulers of this world, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. For God, in whose presence we are this day assembled,—whose aid and blessing we this day implore,—before whom we would this day humble ourselves, not merely by the outward prostration of our bodies, but by the bowing down of the inner man of our hearts,—has been making bare His holy arm in righteous judgment, so as to arrest the attention and command the reverence even of many who do not usually regard the work of the Lord, nor consider the operation of His hands. He has been showing us as a nation that, with all our fancied greatness and with all our fancied stability, He has only to withhold His countenance and protection, and we totter to our fall. He has been showing us that, as the Assyrian, and the Grecian, and the Roman, so also the British Empire may speedily cease to be an Empire, if He to whom belong “the shields of the earth” wills it that her sceptre should depart. He has been showing us, in events that have recently transpired, “terrible things in righteousness,” and causing us to “drink the wine of astonishment.” He has been saying to us as a nation, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

Are these to be regarded as exaggerated statements, or too highly coloured representations? Are they to be regarded as words, proper enough to be uttered on a day of general fasting, humiliation, and prayer, but with more, after all, of sound merely, than of real sense and significance? Are they to be regarded as words which, although fit and becoming to be spoken in the House of God, would convey no meaning if addressed to men on the street, or in the market place, engaged in the matter-of-fact transactions of every day life? Or are they to be regarded as the statement of sober truths and of melancholy realities? Let the general prevalence of commercial stagnation,—let the failure of well-established houses which hardly ever contemplated it as even a possible thing that they should be unable to meet their

liabilities,—let the dearth of the necessities of life, placing them almost beyond the reach of the poor, and threatening them at least with starvation, if not the nation at large with famine,—let numerous and well-equipped armies, not indeed foiled by other opposing armies, but dying, as it might be stated in the verdict of an inquest, “by the visitation of God,”—let sagacious statesmen at their wits’ end, not knowing what measures to devise either for the restoration of peace, or for the successful prosecution of war,—let all these complicated calamities furnish an answer. These are calamities which cannot be overlooked nor spoken lightly of, even by those who might be little affected by hearing of evils of another kind,—by hearing, for example, of the spiritual decay of churches, of the scarcity of candidates for the Gospel ministry, of the unanswered cry of perishing multitudes saying, “Come over and help us,” of the withholding of the gracious influences of God’s Holy Spirit. And, in view of such calamities, are we to think it a strange thing if men should be constrained to pause and ponder? Ought we sceptically to say that, in such circumstances, a day of fasting and prayer may after all be followed by no good result? Ought we, putting away guilt from ourselves and rolling it upon others, to allege that our rulers may have been influenced by no pure and proper motives in the appointment of such a day? Ought we not rather to pray that, as the judgments of God are abroad in the land, the inhabitants thereof generally—we and our rulers—may learn righteousness? And ought we not to be thankful that a call has been addressed to us from a quarter whence such a call has been too seldom heard, to humble ourselves before God in fasting and prayer?

The tendency of the times has of late years been such that, but for some signal judgment poured out upon, or suspended over our land, a national fast was likely to become a thing unknown. No very long period has elapsed since a leading statesman of our day propounded in a public document sentiments which, whether or not he intended them to be so understood, were eagerly interpreted by infidels and so-called free-thinkers as meaning that if, on the apprehended approach of a pestilence, men would only sweep their streets, and whitewash their houses, and feed the poor in the crowded lanes of their cities, they might dispense with everything like special prayer to God for its removal. We regard it, not as affording occasion for any taunting retort, nor for any vain-glorious boasting, but certainly as a circumstance not a little significant, that, under the premiership of the same statesman, and within a year after the publication of the document referred to, a solemn and earnest exhortation should have been addressed to all the “loving subjects” of our Queen, to humble themselves in fasting and prayer before that God at whose command the “pestilence walks in darkness,” and the “destruction wastes at noon-day,” and famine goes forth with its woes, and war spreads its disastrous and desolating influence over the world.

We have adverted to the tendency of the age, and to the likelihood of national fasts, or indeed any national recognition of God, becoming, but for the out-pouring of terrible judgments, things unknown. And should the calamities with which we are now visited be averted,—should the war be brought to a speedy termination, and peace established for a long series of years throughout all our borders,—should commerce revive, and trade flourish, and success attend all our speculations, and our land be filled with “the finest of the wheat,”—and the minds and thoughts of our statesmen return to the channels from which they have been temporarily diverted by the doubtful success of a protracted struggle,—those among us who live to old age might, in the end of their days, have to speak of this day as the last day of national fasting and prayer observed in our country. This we should regard as a state of things deeply to be deplored. For, while we protest against the interference of civil governments in the internal affairs of churches, and repudiate the idea of men being *made* religious by any legislative enactment, we do hold it to be right and becoming that nations should, in their collective capacity, pray to God for national blessings required, and praise God for national blessings already bestowed. Just as we believe it to be imperative upon individuals, and families, and churches, in all these several capacities, reverently to wait upon God, and to recognize His hand in all His dealings with them; so do we affirm it to be imperative upon nations *as such*, from time to time, as the indications of Providence may suggest the propriety of it, to humble themselves before God, and to “kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and they perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” Such a time is the present; and that at such a time we are called upon by those in authority over us, to unite in acknowledging the hand of God, we rejoice to find. In this, we may say our fears have been disappointed, our expectations exceeded. We hardly expected such an exhortation,—an exhortation so seasonable in itself, and expressed in terms so perfectly appropriate,* as that which has been addressed to us. But “the King’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will.” Let us plead with God that from this day a new spirit may animate all our own efforts to promote His glory, and a new spirit pervade the councils of our nation. Such prayers offered in faith will be heard: such prayers offered in faith will be answered in due time. We are not straitened in God: let us not be straitened in ourselves. Let it not be true of us, as it was long ago of a highly privileged community,—let it not be true of us, that mighty works cannot be done among us, because of our unbelief. Let it not be true of us, “that we have not, because we ask not,” or because asking, we “ask amiss,”—influenced by unworthy motives, or with low and selfish objects in view.

* See the Royal Proclamation on the third page.

Let us not "limit the Holy One of Israel." "Our fathers trusted in Him: they trusted, and He did deliver them: they cried unto Him, and were delivered: they trusted in Him, and were not confounded." He who, in the old time, raised up Daniel as a minister of state, can raise up other Daniels as ministers of state now. When in Germany, help for the church was required in the high places of civil power, the Elector of Saxony was brought forward in the Providence of God. When in Scotland, help was required in the high places of civil power, the "Good Regent" appeared. And, without even deposing any of those who are at present intrusted with the ordering of our nation's affairs, God can impart to them the grace which shall constrain them to rule in His fear, and to look to Him for the wisdom which He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. The aspect of affairs might, by God's merciful interposition, be speedily and completely changed. The calamities of war might be succeeded by the blessings of peace. To the advancing tide of immorality might be addressed by God the irresistible command, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." That righteousness which exalteth a nation might regulate all our affairs; and that sin might be scrupulously avoided, which is the ruin and the reproach of any people. In all the departments of the government service,—in all the operations of railroad, and steamboat, and other companies,—in all the journeyings and in all the transactions of private individuals, regard might be had every day to the glory of God, and the Divine command might be reverently and conscientiously observed, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Blessings temporal and spiritual might be

* "On such an occasion our first duty plainly was to confess our demerits and humbly to acknowledge that the evils we endured and feared were not more than we had deserved. This nation had been highly favoured by God; but had we so drunk the cup of prosperity as to make it profitable to the national health and the good of mankind, or at least of those under our rule and within the sphere of our influence? Had we used our prosperity to increase the comforts and raise the moral character of the poorer classes of the community? Had we done all that we might have done to spread the knowledge of the blessed Gospel throughout our own dependencies and among distant heathen tribes? Had we made our world-wide commerce the pioneer of religion? Had there been exhibited a true self-denying charitable spirit—an exemplary practical confession of the sovereignty of God—a ready and sincere homage to the cause of the Saviour on the part of those who gave the tone to public opinion and the complexion to the national character?"

"Not to speak of the studied exclusion of religion from the ordinary transactions of modern society—the absence of all reference to the sovereignty of God and to the sanctions of His Gospel in the public acts of our Government except on extraordinary occasions—not to speak of the perversions and prostitutions of genius and learning in the service of immorality and irreligion—not to enlarge on the luxury and extravagance that consumed the time and wasted the faculties of too many of the wealthier classes and crippled their means of doing good, he would suggest one topic of the last importance—he meant the observance of the Sabbath. He deemed this a subject of the deepest interest; and what, he would ask, had been the course of our Legislature regarding it? While there was a strong inclination on the part of a great number of the tradesmen of this metropolis to limit their worldly calling on that day, the Legislature of this Christian country refused them the protection which they desired; and, more than this, we were threatened with measures—of which, thank God, the danger was past for the

showered down upon us abundantly, for God is waiting to bestow them; and He might, by a grateful people, be devoutly adored as the Giver of them all. "Our sons might be as plants grown up in their youth, our daughters as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace. Our garners might be full, affording all manner of store, and our sheep bring forth thousands and tens of thousands in our streets. Our oxen might be strong to labour; there might be no breaking in, nor going out, and no complaining in our streets." And the testimony of praise and admiration might be elicited by the contemplation of a scene so fair, "Happy is that people that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord!"

But we must not, by the consideration of blessed results that might ensue from a sincere and general turning to the Lord, and the out-pouring upon our land of the influences of His Holy Spirit, be diverted from the object of our present meeting together. We have forgotten God our Rock, and the High God our Redeemer. We have for- blessings of which we have spoken, as all in reserve and ready to be bestowed upon individuals and communities in the right spirit asking them, are in the meantime withheld. The gracious and sanctifying influences of God's Spirit are restrained. Sin is extending its baneful and blighting influences over the country. Because of swearing, and lying, and drunkenness, and Sabbath-breaking, and general forgetfulness of God, the land mourneth. In temporal things, instead of that prosperity, during the continuance of which we said, "Our mountain standeth strong, and we shall never be moved," we are tried by melancholy and perplexing reverses. Instead of that plenty, during the continuance of which we acknowledged not the bounty of Him who opened His hand, and supplied all our wants, we are now threatened and visited with scarcity. Instead of that peace, during the continuance of which we recognized not the merciful intervention of Him who "made wars to cease unto the ends of the earth, broke the bow, cut the spear in sunder, and burned the chariot in the fire," we are, as a nation, involved in the horrors and calamities of war. "I am pained at my very heart," every one of us may say with the prophet—"Thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.—How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?"

It is time for us to revert to these words. They were read as our text,—rather intended, however, as a motto, than as the subject, at present, of any set and formal exposition. The prophet, Divinely

present—which would have supplied fresh and powerful temptations to all classes on that holy day—leading the poor to waste the little time they possessed for worship in amusements harmless in themselves, but positively injurious when they interfered with the duties of religion."—Sermon by the Bishop of London, on the day of the late National Fast in Great Britain, as reported in the Times, of March 22nd.

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commissioned, had been foretelling the invasion of his country by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. As a “fierce lion” from the forest, that monarch, the conqueror and destroyer of nations, was to come and desolate the land. With an army overspreading the country like a cloud, with “chariots as a whirlwind,” and “horses swifter than eagles,” he was to surprise the infatuated people, careless of God’s predictions, and saying to themselves, Peace, peace. Before the mind of the prophet the terrible scene was present, as if already being enacted; and, so far from anticipating with complacency the fearful retribution that was to come upon those who despised all his entreaties and all his warnings, he speaks of himself as filled with the deepest distress at what in prophetic vision he saw and heard—“My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war—How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?”

Without noticing at greater length the special events of the period to which our text refers, we may adopt these words as expressive of the feelings of all who who are watching with a deep and painful interest the struggle with a formidable hostile power, in which our nation and its allies are at present engaged.

I. The christian, uttering these words, may be regarded as expressing his deep and heart-affecting conviction of the evils and sufferings necessarily attendant upon war in whatever circumstances it may be carried on. “I am pained at my very heart—because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.” Awfully graphic are the descriptions given by inspired writers of the miseries in store for a land when “the Lord of Hosts mustereth the host of the battle,” and causeth “the sword to be sharpened for a sore slaughter.” “Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man’s heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy the sinners out of it—I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. Their bows shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.”

Fearful are the scenes witnessed during the prevalence of a fatal and wide spread plague. Thus we are told of a pestilence in the fifteenth century—

“Thick and pantingly

The breath was fetched, and with huge labourings heaved.

At last a heavy pain oppressed the head,
 A wild delirium came: their weeping friends
 Were strangers now, and this no home of theirs.
 Harassed with toil on toil, the sinking powers
 Lay prostrate and o'erthrown, a ponderous sleep
 Wrapt all the senses up: they slept and died.

Nothing but lamentable sounds were heard,
 Nor aught was seen but ghastly views of death.
 Infectious horror ran from face to face,
 And pale despair. 'Twas all the business then
 To tend the sick, and in their turns to die.
 In heaps they fell; and oft the bed, they say,
 The sickening, dying, and the dead contained."

But more fearful, as it appears to us, are the scenes enacted and the sufferings endured in war. In the pestilence, man lifts not up his hand against his fellow-man, but rather, so long as terror permits him to remain by his dying bed, does all that he can to alleviate his misery; the very stillness of the sick chamber and the startling progress of the malady fill the mind with a solemn awe; tumultuous passions are hushed; and in the plague, so fatal in its ravages, and so utterly beyond the most strenuous efforts of men to arrest its progress, the hand of God is distinctly recognized. The sufferings which men endure in consequence of war are likewise from God; but the instrumentality of man intervenes, so that the agency of God is not so clearly apparent. And it is this that, in our estimation, renders the horrors of war so peculiarly terrible,—the fact that they are inflicted by men upon their fellow-men. "Let us fall," said David, when choosing pestilence rather than war, "let us fall now into the hand of the Lord: for His mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." It is terrible to think of men being *thus* employed, in the carrying out of God's purposes, in the execution of His righteous judgments,—It is terrible, I say, to think of their being employed in inflicting upon each other the severest sufferings to which the human race is exposed in this world of sin. A kind of unity is maintained even among devils for the accomplishment of their hellish designs; but, as to the nations of this world, having a place given them for their habitation, with room enough for them all, presenting scenes of surpassing loveliness and affording ample supplies for their liberal sustenance, *they* have expended more of their strength, and of their riches, and of their skill, in efforts to destroy each other, than for the attainment of any other single object. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" "O shame to men! Devil with Devil damned
 Firm concord holds: men only disagree
 Of creatures rational, though under hope

Of heavenly grace : and God proclaiming peace,
 Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
 Among themselves, and levy cruel wars ;
 Wasting the earth, each other to destroy,
 As if (which might induce us to accord)
 Man had not hellish foes enough besides,
 That day and night for his destruction wait."

Should we attempt to *delineate* the evils of war, we should not know how to represent it in colours dark enough to shadow forth the horrid reality. Should we attempt to *enumerate* them, we should hardly know where to begin nor where to end. Although, however, no enumeration of these evils may now be attempted, this may be remarked—that they divide themselves into two great and obvious classes. These two classes may be styled *suffering* and *sin*,—the former including all the physical evils, and the latter all the moral evils, to which war naturally and inevitably gives rise. Under each of these classes the evils are unnumbered : their name is Legion, for they are many.

With accounts of the physical evils, the sufferings, necessarily consequent upon war, the minds of those who in their youth study the Greek and Roman classics, are early saturated. If it be only a little Latin that is learned in boyhood, a little of "Eutropius" perhaps, or a little of "Cæsar," and if almost all recollection of what has been learned is afterwards obliterated by the occupations and cares of maturer years, the words signifying "horrid wars" are among the last that linger in the memory. An ineffaceable impression of the atrocities of war is produced likewise upon the minds of all who have read with care the inspired books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Not now to refer more minutely to ancient history, either sacred or profane, all who have read with interest and intelligence the history of the wars in the days of the first Napoleon, must be familiar with the most heart-rending details. They will remember accounts, although they may be unable to form any adequate conception of the reality,—they will remember accounts of roads covered for successive miles with thousands of the dead and the dying piled upon each other, and weltering in their blood,—of hospitals containing thousands of wounded men set on fire, and consuming the wretched, helpless, victims,—of consternation seizing peaceful villages on the approach of a hostile foe, and of the inhabitants, some massacred, and others fleeing in terror from the scene of carnage and desolation. Leaving out of view for the present all the calamities to which those especially are exposed, whose territory is invaded,—golden harvests destroyed, highly cultivated vineyards trodden down, opulent cities pillaged, rural hamlets smoking in ruins, while their inoffensive inhabitants are massacred, or dispersed as fugitives and vagabonds in their own

native land,—leaving out of view for the present such calamities as these, let us think of the sufferings to which the *invaders* who, in the present war, are our own brethren, our kinsmen according to the flesh, are exposed. * How sad to reflect upon the miseries which they have endured for the protection of our country's liberties, and the liberties of Europe! Is death in *any case* terrible? How much more terrible, when encountered in the absence of all the alleviating circumstances by which, in most ordinary cases, dying men are comforted! Apart from their prospects for eternity, we should say, Happier far are those who are slain in battle, than their comrades who are borne from the field wounded and disabled,—to linger for a few miserable days or weeks in comfortless sheds, without proper food or efficient medical attendance,—no mother, wife, or sister being near, to speak to them in words of encouragement and condolence, to minister to their wants, to smooth their pillow, to ease their posture, or to close their eyes in death. But it is inexpressibly awful to think of men being cut down, as thousands of our countrymen have been cut down, in the twinkling of an eye! How terrible to think of thousands of men passing in a moment from the scene of deadly conflict, where all the most furious passions of human nature are excited to violent exercise, to the solemn realities of eternity, and the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge! For, while the battle field may in some points of view be spoken of as the field of fame and the field of glory, the Christian cannot

* For several ideas in this paragraph I am indebted to Robert Hall, the great English preacher of the last generation. I make this general acknowledgment, as, on account of difference in *arrangement*, and dissimilarity in *expression*, I could not mark any particular sentence as a quotation.

† In the writings of the ancient historian Herodotus, we find a pathetic allusion to the fact that, the most of those who perish in war are cut off in youth, or in the prime of their manhood. Contrasting peace and war, he says,—“In the former, sons bury their fathers: in the latter, fathers bury their sons.” Robert Hall quotes this, and turns it to admirable account in his “Reflections on War,” already referred to. “Though the whole race of man is doomed to dissolution, and we are all hastening to our long home; yet at each successive moment life and death seem to divide betwixt them the dominion of mankind, and *life to have the largest share*. It is otherwise in war: death reigns there without a rival, and without control. War is the work, the element, or rather the sport and triumph of death, who glories not only in the extent of his conquest, but in the richness of his spoil. In the other methods of attack, in the other forms which death assumes, the feeble and the aged, who at the best can live but a short time, are usually the victims: here it is the vigorous and the strong. It is remarked by an ancient historian, that in *peace children bury their parents*, in *war parents bury their children*: nor is the difference small. Children lament their parents, *sincerely* indeed, but with that moderate and tranquil sorrow which it is natural for those to feel who are conscious of retaining many tender ties, many animating prospects. Parents mourn for their children with the bitterness of despair: the aged parent, the widowed mother, loses, when she is deprived of her children, everything but the *capacity of suffering*: her heart, withered and desolate, admits no other object, cherishes no other hope. It is “Rachael weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not.” It is almost unnecessary to remark that, in making mention of the *despairing* sorrow of parents bereaved of their children, the writer just quoted refers only to the extinction of *earthly* hopes, and the drying up of *earthly* sources of comfort.

but view it as being also the death-bed of men with immortal souls which instantaneously go thence to receive their final doom.

And this leads us to advert, in a word or two, to the other class of evils,—the moral evils, the sins,—naturally, and we feel that we may too truly say, as we have said, *inevitably*, consequent upon war. On the most favourable supposition, one of the two contending armies must of necessity be in the wrong; but even in the case of those who are arrayed upon the side of justice and of right, how the moral perceptions of the great majority become blunted, and how their minds become familiarized with vice in its most odious forms! If war, as the apostle asserts, is to be attributed to the sinful lusts of men, it certainly tends to foster and strengthen the very lusts in which it has originated, to beget every vicious propensity, and to perpetuate every licentious and immoral practice.

To the physical evils, the sufferings, of which we have spoken, thousands of our own countrymen, with their allies, are at this moment exposed,—thousands of them, we may say, are at this moment actually enduring them,—nor is there any prospect, so far as men can judge, of their being brought to a speedy termination. The moral evils—the sins—to which we have alluded will, unless Divine grace interpose, become fearfully prevalent, if indeed they are not fearfully prevalent already. Is there not cause why we should as a nation humble ourselves before God in fasting and prayer? Is there not, in the present state of things, a melancholy appropriateness in the words of the prophet,—do not his words, so significant in their *spiritual* import, bear a sad significance now, if *literally* understood,—“O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night, for the slain of the daughter of my people!” Brethren, we have had enough, and we have all joined in it, of severe animalversion upon the mismanagement of our rulers. Something more serious becomes us now. It is something more serious to which we are called to-day. Let us humble *ourselves* before God. Let us

“It did not become us, when all ought to bow beneath the hand of God, to be casting reproaches on one another, or to shift from our own shoulders to other classes the burden of national sins.”—Sermon by the Bishop of London, quoted in a previous note.

“When the Christian sees threatening appearances in the Church (and the same remark is applicable to threatening appearances in the nation), he is ready to apprehend danger in the church. ‘Here is God,’ he says, ‘coming out of His place to take vengeance;’ or rather, ‘There is God departing from us; He is leaving us to ourselves.’ And instead of blaming others, his heart smites him, and he blames himself. ‘Is not this my work?’ he says. ‘Talk not to me of other men’s sins; I have no heart to hear of them. They are heavy, perhaps, but not so heavy as mine. And besides, others around me would have honoured the Gospel more, had I not so dishonoured it!’ * * * O that we could at this hour hear such language as this from every man in our church! O that whenever danger seems to threaten our Zion, we would all think of the part we have had in bringing on that danger! We blame others, and they may be worthy of blame; but it would become us better to blame ourselves. We are all guilty in this thing; may the Lord give us self-accusing, as well as anxious and trembling hearts!”—Sermon by Rev. C. Bradley.

lay our hands upon our mouths. "Come and let us return unto the Lord." He only who hath torn, can heal us; He only who hath smitten, can bind us up. Let us look to God with filial confidence, and at the same time with unfeigned humility. O that we could say, with the Psalmist, "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved"—but "The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge!"

II. We have said that the Christian, in adopting as his own the words of our text, expresses his deep and heart-affecting conviction of the evils inseparably connected with war, in whatever circumstances it may be carried on: we now observe, farther, that the Christian, even when uttering such language of lamentation, is sustained and comforted by the assurance that the God in whom he trusts will make even the wrath of men to praise Him, and ultimately bring real good out of present evil. He does indeed feel, as has already been said, that the physical and moral evils naturally and inevitably consequent upon war are by men incalculable; but he feels, at the same time, that even *war* is included among the "all things" which are to "work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose."

This implies an abiding conviction in his mind that, when war is sent as a scourge upon any land, it is *God* who sends it. It is true of warriors, however regardless they may be of God's will, and however unconcerned about the principles of His moral government, that they are, in a certain sense, instruments in God's hands for the accomplishment of His all-wise purposes. It is with them, as it was with the Assyrian of old, who, though "*he meant not so, neither in his heart did he think so,*" was nevertheless "*the rod of God's anger,*—sent against a hypocritical nation, with a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." God himself affirms, in no equivocal terms, that war is among the terrible judgments which He keeps in His quiver for the punishment of sinful and rebellious men. He distinctly declares that, as He sends among men, for His own righteous purposes, the locust and the caterpillar, the blight and the mildew,—and as He sends "*terror and consumption, and the burning ague, to consume their eyes, and cause them sorrow of heart,*"—and as He "*breaks the pride of their power, and makes their heaven as iron, and their earth as brass,*" so that their strength is spent in vain, and their land yields not her increase,"—and as He "*sends wild beasts among them, which rob them of their children, and destroy their cattle, and make them few in number, and render their high-ways desolate,*" so also He "*brings the sword upon a land, and avenges the quarrel of His covenant.*" This declaration must of necessity be either most unmeaning or most obnoxious to those who believe, and who would have others to believe that, in some way or other, an *established order of nature*

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exists without any continual exercise of the Divine will and the Divine power; but it is most significant and most comforting to the Christian, who is reminded and assured by it, that verily there "is a God that judgeth in the earth." How chilling and comfortless the thought of God having left the affairs of men to be governed by chance, or by the operation of what some call *unvarying natural laws*,—how chilling and comfortless such a thought, compared with the representation which He everywhere throughout the Scriptures gives of His "most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing of all His creatures and of all their actions!" To what numberless unseen dangers are we exposed from day to day,—from what various unsuspected causes may sickness and death proceed,—by what sudden disasters may we be deprived of our dearest friends, our richest possessions, and all our most valued earthly enjoyments! How comforting to the Christian, exposed to such calamities and vicissitudes, must be the assurance that, without God's permission, no evil can befall him, nor any plague come nigh his dwelling!

Nothing can be more explicit than the language of Scripture in which God represents Himself as bestowing upon men all the comforts that they enjoy, and as, on the other hand, inflicting upon them, for wise purposes, all the calamities with which they are visited. "*He covereth the heaven with clouds, He prepareth rain for the earth, He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.*" "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat *from God.*" "The eyes of all wait upon *Him*; and *He* gives them their meat in due season. *He* openeth His hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." And, on the other hand, "shall there be *evil* in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create *evil*: I the Lord do all these things." So it is with war—and that is the point with which we have now to do. When it extends its desolations, it is *God* who sends it as a scourge upon the earth. Not to Him, however, is to be attributed the *moral evil, the sin*, which accompanies and results from it. Contentions and wars are the *manifestation*, and God in His over-ruling Providence makes them at the same time the *punishment* of the wickedness of men. And when those who have been made use of by God as instruments in punishing the wickedness of others congratulate themselves upon their success, and proudly speak as if by their own right hand they had gotten them the victory, with what contempt does He who sitteth in the heavens speak of their ignorant and vain presumption! As in the case of the Assyrian already referred to, God laughs to scorn their arrogant self-complacency. It is a striking thing to think of Him who knows the end from the beginning, looking down from the habitation of His holiness, and foreseeing the very communings which proud men will hold with

themselves when, as His instruments, they shall have overcome their enemies. Thus, at the very time when he is making known to Isaiah His purpose to employ the Assyrian monarch in punishing the perverseness and ingratitude of Israel, he foresees and foretells how the heart of that vain monarch will be lifted up with pride, and represents him as speaking to himself, and saying, "Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and Samaria; shall I not, as I have done to Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Wherefore (saith the Lord) it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, by the strength of my arm I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent." How withering the contempt with which the Sovereign Ruler speaks of such vain self-communings! "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself as if it were no wood. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory He shall kindle a burning, like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His Holy one for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day; and shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standard-bearer faintheeth. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them."

Has there not been among us, as a people, somewhat of this proud self-complacency? Have we not been ready to think within ourselves—nay, have we not often thus expressed ourselves, in prospect of that which is now, alas! no longer the "coming struggle?" Have we not said, or heard with approbation others say, What will the power of the Russian autocrat be when opposed to a nation like ours which has covered the sea with her ships, and planted her colonies in the remotest ends of the earth? Were we not victorious long ago, over the "Invincible Armada?" Does not the fame of Trafalgar, and of the Nile, and of Waterloo, still surround us with a halo of glory? What difficulty can we, who successfully coped with the first Napoleon, experience in scattering the forces of the Czar, especially when the successor of that Napoleon by whom we were more nearly over-matched than ever by any other, is to fight side by side with us in friendly alliance? Sebastopol must soon be taken, and the Crimea must speedily fall into our hands, and St. Petersburg itself, unless it be saved by a timely capitulation, will be blockaded, and the Russian power so crippled that it will no longer take rank among the higher powers of Europe.

We believe that the war in which we are engaged is a justifiable war. We believe that it was inevitable. We believe that it was with the extremest reluctance, and not till every conceivable means had been tried for the perpetuating of peace, that our rulers engaged in it. But, engaging even in a just and righteous war in such a spirit as that of which we have spoken, were not disaster and rebuke to be expected? It was *by the power of God* that the "Invincible Armada" was scattered. And we believe that it was not less truly, although less manifestly, by the power of God that the career of the first Napoleon was arrested, after he had, as God's instrument, inflicted the punishment which he was raised up to inflict on the European nations. The same God still reigns. We do not believe that miracles, strictly so called, are wrought now as they were wrought many a time in the wars of ancient Israel. But we believe that, just as easily as the walls of Jericho were overthrown by His power, the fortifications of Sebastopol could have been long ere now demolished, if the Lord of hosts had gone forth with our armies. And, not to speak of what *might have been*, has not God actually shown us, by the removal of the Czar, not only from the scene of the present conflict, but from the stage of this world altogether, how soon and how easily, did it seem good in His sight, He could take away every obstacle that now prevents the restoration of peace, and bring the war to a speedy termination? It must have been most gratifying to all believers in the Bible and in the superintending Providence of God, to observe in what light this remarkable event has been viewed by the ablest political writers of our day. Most distinct, even by them, has been the recognition of God's hand in the sudden stroke. "No single event,"—we read in the journal which may, without disparagement to any other, be called the most influential in the world,—*"No single event could have happened in Europe, of such momentous importance at the present time to the whole family of civilized nations; no event could have occurred more startling, from the contrast between the pride and power of a ruler who sent forth but yesterday his myriads to battle, and seemed to hold the issues of life and death in his own hands, but who is now less than the least of his serfs, and lower than the dust of that empire which was lately his own. In the long array of history, and among those figures dimly seen along the ages of the past, which bear imperishable traces of their guilt and their doom, none stands a more visible mark of retributive justice than he who has thus abruptly passed from the scene of human affairs. The summons of Belshazzar upon the fiery wall was not more appalling,—the destruction of Sennacherib not more terrible. This blow has fallen not only on the armies which Russia has equipped for the defence of her territory,—not only on her policy and her alliances, but more especially on the one great author of the war, who has expiated, with the loss of reputation, the loss of power, and the loss of life itself, the outrage he*

committed on the rights of other States and on the peace of Europe. We shall not press against the bier of the public enemy the charges to which in his lifetime the Emperor Nicholas was exposed; we shall not give vent to feelings of hostility and resentment against one who is beyond the reach of human censure. The touch of an Omnipotent will redresses the fabric of all earthly power to dust and ashes, and vindicates the course of eternal justice by means infinitely above our knowledge. Such an event silences the discord of our world, as it were by the stroke of heaven, and must suggest even to the most indifferent minds, thoughts which cannot find their place among the petty interests of daily life."—(*The Times*, March 3, 1855.)

"The Lord reigns;" and it is the high prerogative, and the distinguishing honour of His government, to bring good out of evil. The persuasion that He can do so, and that He certainly will do so, is the comfort of the believer, even when, reflecting on the miseries of war, he says,—“I am pained at my very heart—because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.” How he does so in the case of individuals, we can already in some measure perceive, as we read, from time to time, the accounts that reach us from the scene of the deadly struggle. It is most remarkable how frequent, in the letters of officers and soldiers, are the references to God’s superintending power and God’s guiding hand. “It is my fervent prayer,” writes a soldier to his wife, “that God may protect you.” “I ought to be very thankful to God,” writes another, “for sparing me to write to you this night, when so many of my brothers in arms are lying dead around me.” The suspicion that expressions like these, which might be multiplied indefinitely, are mere words of course, must be something very far removed from the charity which “hopeth all things,”—especially when we take into account the circumstances of inconvenience and discomfort in which they were penned,—many of them having been written in tents penetrated by the piercing winds, amid suffering from the want of sufficient and proper food, and even amid exposure, in some cases, to the cannon-shot of the enemy. Good will

† “May He not righteously extort by His power, from the very wickedness of His perverse subjects, a glory which their homage, their love, their obedience, will not yield Him? And the whole spirit and avowal of His declarations is, that He will do this. Inasmuch, that we need not hesitate to assert that, at the final account of this world, He will derive from it as much glory as could have been derived.”

“But, to think in what manner,—of what kind,—a stupendous proportion of this tribute will have been yielded! A world that has rendered the highest possible glory to its Creator, while it did not wish to glorify Him! while its spirit has been estranged from His love and His fear; while pervaded by a dreadful enmity to Him; while the scene of an enormous rebellion against Him; while it created to itself all conceivable plagues, rather than be conformed to His holy laws; its successive generations, through thousands of years maintaining the mortal strife against righteousness, and against the Supreme Good! * * * But, He has an overruling wisdom, and power, which can constrain the mighty evil that is in the world to render honour against its will; to act with an unconscious and undesigned obedience.”—JOHN FLETCHER.

certainly be brought out of evil in the case of any who, in their extremity, may be led to think of God, of whom perhaps they thought little, if at all before,—of any who, amid the scenes of war, may seek and obtain preparation of God for the enjoyment of a blessed and eternal peace.

Even in the darkest and most desponding view of the matter, which the believer in God's Almighty and All-wise government can take,—even supposing both contending armies to be wrong in principle, which we are far from supposing to be the case in the present conflict,—he must be comforted by the assurance already referred to, that God will overrule the aim, and the strife, and the confusion, for the promotion of His glory. He has before this time so directed wars of aggression, undertaken from the most sordid and selfish motives, that they have been instrumental in breaking up oppressive tyrannies, and baneful superstitions which otherwise seemed destined to be perpetual. Horrible as war is, there are evils worse than war. We believe it would have been an evil worse than war, had our country for the sake of preserving her commerce, connived at the oppression of a weaker by a stronger power. We believe that it would have been an evil unspeakably worse than war, had our country acceded to any base and dishonourable proposal to share with other powers the spoils of the enfeebled Ottoman Empire. We should regard war as an evil less to be deplored than such a combination among the great European powers as would certainly tend to the extinction of every honourable feeling, of every noble and generous sentiment. We should regard war as an evil less to be deplored than such a peace as might be procured and maintained only by permitting a rude and ruthless despotism to place its iron foot on the neck of enslaved nations, and trample them in the dust. We believe that our country has at times engaged in war, when she ought not to have done so. Nor are we prepared to deny that at times she may not have interfered, when interference and mediation on behalf of the oppressed might have been justifiable and right. But, however these things may be, there never was a time, so far as we are acquainted with the history of our country, when it was more clearly right and necessary, to have recourse to war, than at the present time. We have no other resource, but with a mere desperate desire for the destruction of our enemies, but with humble dependence upon God, and with a devout recognition of His hand overruling all things for the promotion of His glory, enter into the spirit of the Psalmist when he exclaimed,—“Who will bring us into the strong city? who will lead us into Edom? Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies? Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.”

III. Finally, the christian, in uttering the words of our text, is comforted by the assurance that the evils of which he complains shall in

Due time come to an end. I have already said that, in adopting as his own the words of our text, he expresses his deep and heart-affecting conviction of the evils necessarily consequent upon war in whatever circumstances it may be carried on. And I have said that, in uttering these words, he is comforted by the assurance that the God in whom he trusts will make even the wrath of men to praise Him, and bring real good out of present evil. And I now say, still farther, that the Christian, in uttering these words, is comforted by the assurance that the evils which he deplures will in due time come to an end. "The mountain of the Lord's house is to be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." But what mighty changes are to take place, what commotions and convulsions are to agitate our world, before the ultimate and universal establishment of Christ's kingdom! The prediction in the inspired volume respecting successive revolutions in the *Jewish* nation and the ultimate reign of the Messiah, is capable of application to the present state of the whole world: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn,—until He come whose right it is, and I will give it him." Of what human institution, of what earthly government,—even of the institutions and governments to which he is most cordially attached,—would a right-minded man like to say, Let it endure perpetually—let it endure just as it is? Well,—an overturning, in one way or other, awaits them all; and the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. A period is coming—the period of the millennial glory, when the people of God shall no longer have to mourn over the evils, the existence of which they now deplore—when, as more especially pertinent to our present subject, "wars shall cease unto the ends of the earth." "Violence shall no more be heard in our land, wasting nor destruction within our borders; but our walls shall be called salvation and our gates praise." Other occupations shall engage the attention of men, than biting and devouring each other. The Christian rejoices to believe that wars, inevitable *now*, shall be overruled by God for the accomplishment of His all-wise purposes; but he should also rejoice, surely,—yea, and he *will* rejoice—to think of a coming time when wars shall be inevitable no longer. "They shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Let us humble ourselves, as we are called upon to do this day, on account of our *national* sins. Our nation has been distinguished by privileges far surpassing those enjoyed by most of the other nations of the world. Our historians chronicle, with exact minuteness and with

proud self-complacency, the eras of our nation's rising greatness,—the periods, successively, when she began to emerge from the darkness of idolatry, and to emancipate herself from the bondage of degrading superstitions,—to extend her dominion and her commerce to the most distant parts of the earth,—to arise from comparative insignificance to a lofty and honourable position among nations, many of them possessing a more numerous population and a more fertile soil,—and to be spoken of by many, with a superstitious veneration, as the Arbitress of this world's destiny. But *God* knows far more accurately than the most exact historians the successive periods when, by receiving greater light and acquiring greater influence, her opportunities of promoting the glory of His name, and her consequent responsibility increased; and He knows to what extent that responsibility has been disregarded, and these opportunities have been lost. Nor have we been without our warnings. We have again and again been reminded by the dispensations of God's Providence that, as the glory of other lands departed, when their inhabitants forgot that it was God who "gave them their corn, and their wine, and their oil, and multiplied their silver and their gold," so the glory of our land *might* pass away, and that God might give our nation's power and privileges to another nation that should bring forth the fruits thereof. It is not necessary that a man should be very old, to remember when the fabric of our nation's greatness seemed to be shaken to its centre, and when insurrection and revolution seemed as likely, speaking after the manner of men, as the continuance of peace and the restoration of prosperity. Was it our own worth, our own prudence, or our own might, that preserved the integrity of our empire when, on the other side of the English channel, the royal throne tottered and fell? Or was it the power of *God* that dispelled the dark and lowering clouds which were suspended over us, fraught apparently with ruin and desolation? And if we acknowledge that it was by God's interposition that impending calamities were averted, was there any general and humble recognition of His goodness and mercy? Mutual congratulations were exchanged as we contemplated our brightening prospects; but was there the deep feeling which *God* prompted the devout ascription of praise, "*The Lord* hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad?" We do hope and trust that a bright and blessed future is yet before our beloved country; but, as preparatory to this, there must be—if our expectations and hopes are well-founded, there *will* be—real penitence, deep humiliation, a general turning to the Lord. For, not more applicable to His ancient people, than to any other nation for which He has special blessings in reserve, are the words of God, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them."

Let us as *individuals* humble ourselves before God. For the improvement or misimprovement of our privileges we shall have *individually* to answer in the day of final reckoning. Extortion

practised upon the subdued nations of Africa or India, or other parts of the world,—and the introduction among them of such evil customs and of such articles of commerce as were sure to prove a curse and not a blessing,—and other acts of iniquity perpetrated either under the immediate sanction of our government, or by “companies” of our countrymen under different names, and incorporated for various purposes,—these things may bring upon us in this present world sore national retribution. If our land should be scourged on account of these things, we shall suffer the *temporal* consequences of the general sin; but, in the last judgment, whose decisions shall be final and irreversible, we shall have to answer only for those iniquities which we have as individuals committed, or in which we have as individuals been implicated. But let us not—surely, if we know anything of our own hearts, we will not—hasten to exonerate ourselves from all share in the national guilt,—the pride, the self-complacency, the forgetfulness of God. If we look within, do we not discover that these traits of the national character, are also the characteristics of the individual? It becomes us to lay our hands upon our mouths, and our mouths in the dust. The humble acknowledgment is appropriate to us as individuals, “Unclean, unclean!” and the fervent prayer, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

It is to all of us a most momentous question—it ought to be by all of us most seriously pondered—Are we individually on “the Lord’s side?” While we long and pray for the blessings of temporal peace, have we experienced, or do we really desire to know by experience, the blessedness of *peace with God*,—the peace which passeth all understanding? Peace with God is the only real safety, the only real happiness. “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Enjoying peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be secure amid all the commotions and agitations by which our world may be convulsed. Whatever may be the issue of the present struggle, or of other wars yet to be waged among the nations of the earth, we shall “lift up our heads with joy.” The assurance of God’s almighty and all-wise government will ever impart to our minds a serene satisfaction, as it might do, were it generally apprehended and believed in, to all the inhabitants of the world. “The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.” “Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!” Amen.

THE END.

